

Gunbarlang language

Gunbarlang, or **Kunbarlang**, is an Australian Aboriginal language in northern Australia with multiple dialects. Other names are *Gungalang* and *Warlang*. Speakers are multilingual in Kunwinjku and Mawng. Most of the Gunbarlang people now speak Kunwinjku.^[5]

The language is part of a language revival project, as a critically endangered language.

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Classification

Gunbarlang has been proposed to be included into the *marne* group of Gunwinyguan family^[6], making its closest relatives the Central Gunwinyguan languages Bininj Kunwok and Dalabon. The label *marne* refers to the phonological shape of the benefactive applicative affix common to all three languages (as opposed to the *bak* languages to the east, e.g. Rembarnga, Ngandi and Wubuy/Nunggubuyu).^[7]

Geographic distribution

Some Gunbarlang speakers live in Warruwi on South Goulburn Island and Maningrida. Historically, it was also spoken in Gunbalanya.^[8]

Grammar

Gunbarlang is a polysynthetic language with complex verb morphology. It includes polypersonal agreement, incorporation, and a number of derivational affixes. Word order in a (transitive) clause is SVO or SOV.^{[9][10]}

Gunbarlang	
	<i>Warlang</i>
Native to	Australia
Region	Arnhem Land
Ethnicity	Gambalang
Extinct	by 2016 ^[1]
Language family	Arnhem <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Gunwinyguan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gunwinggic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gunbarlang</div>
Dialects	Djimbilirri <div>Gurrigurri</div> <div>Gumunggurdu</div> <div>Marrabanggu</div> <div>Marranumbu</div> <div>Gunguluwala^[2]</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	wlg
Glottolog	kunb1251 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/kunb1251) ^[3]
AIATSIS ^[4]	N69 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/australian-aboriginal-languages/language/N69)

Morphosyntax

Morphology is primarily agglutinating. Verbal morphology (rather than case marking or syntax) encodes a significant part of grammatical relations.

Verbal

The verb includes obligatory agreement with its core arguments in the form of bound pronouns. The subject/agent prefix precedes the object prefix. Subject prefixes form four mood series: positive indicative, "non-performative", future/intentional, and potential.^[11]

The verb features derivational affixes, such as benefactive, directional, and TAM.

Nominal

Case is not marked on nouns and free pronouns, but bound pronouns follow nominative-accusative alignment.^[12]

Gunbarlang distinguishes five noun classes on demonstratives (M, F, plants, body-parts, and inanimate), but only four on other constituents (collapsing the latter two).^{[13][14]}

Language revival

As of 2020, Kunbarlang is one of 20 languages prioritised as part of the Priority Languages Support Project, being undertaken by First Languages Australia and funded by the Department of Communications and the Arts. The project aims to "identify and document critically-endangered languages — those languages for which little or no documentation exists, where no recordings have previously been made, but where there are living speakers".^[15]

Notes

1. ABS. "Census 2016, Language spoken at home by Sex (SA2+)" (http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/In dex.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_C16_T09_SA). *stat.data.abs.gov.au*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 29 October 2017.
2. Dixon 2002, p. xl
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Kunbarlang" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kunb1251>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. N69 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/N69>) Gunbarlang at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
5. Gunbarlang (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/wlg/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
6. Evans, N. (2003). *Bininj Gun-Wok: A Pan-Dialectal Grammar of Mayali, Kunwinjku and Kune*. ANU. p. 33. [hdl:1885/53188](https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F53188) (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F53188>).
7. Alpher, B., Evans, N. & Harvey, M. 2003. "Proto Gunwinyguan verb suffixes." In Nicholas Evans (ed.), *The non-Pama-Nyungan languages of northern Australia: Comparative Studies of the continent's most linguistically complex region*, 305-352. Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.
8. Harris 1969

9. Coleman 1982
10. Kapitonov 2019
11. Dixon 2002, p. 338
12. Dixon 2002, p. 350
13. Coleman 1982
14. Dixon 2002, p. 478
15. "Priority Languages Support Project" (<https://www.firstlanguages.org.au/projects/plsp>). *First Languages Australia*. Retrieved 13 January 2020.

References

- Coleman, C. (1982). *A Grammar of Gunbalang with Special Reference to Grammatical Relations*.
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- Kapitonov, I. (2019). *A Grammar of Kunbarlang* (<https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/225743/main.pdf>) (PDF) (PhD thesis). The University of Melbourne. hdl:11343/225743 (<https://hdl.handle.net/11343%2F225743>).

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